

REMARKS

The claims have been amended in accordance with the notice in the Official Gazette dated February 25, 2003.

Claim 24 has been amended to incorporate claim 31, which was indicated as allowable. Claim 31 has been canceled. Claim 32 has been amended to refer to claim 24 instead of now-canceled claim 31. No new matter is added.

For the record, the applicant reasserts all previous remarks with respect to the previous rejection under §102 and the new rejection under §103. Applicant disputes the examiner's contention that the combination in the claims is *prima facie* obvious in light of Bier et al. The applicant also disputes that the showing in the present application is insufficient for purposes of comparing the claimed subject matter to the closest art. Applicant reserves the right to file a continuation to pursue the original claims and the claims pending immediately prior to this amendment.

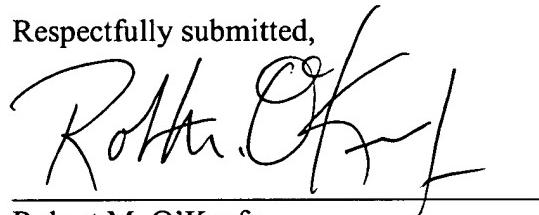
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and Notice of Allowance are courteously solicited.

A request for a three-month extension of time is submitted herewith. If the request is missing, please consider this paper to be a request for such extension and deduct any required fee from deposit account 10-1205.

Should any fees under 37 CFR 1.16-1.21 be required for any reason relating to the enclosed materials, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct such fees from Deposit Account No. 10-1205. The examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the phone number indicated below with any questions or comments, or to otherwise facilitate expeditious and compact prosecution of the application.

Respectfully submitted,



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